DEMOCRACY IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD[1]

I

THE PRELUDE

I HAVE been asking my classical friends, who made the Shield of Achilles? They all agree that it was the god Hephaistos; Homer says so. But in old days I used to read Tertullian, and I have a distinct impression left from him that the gods of the pagans were either devils or deified men or nothing at all. In my boyhood people still read books about sun-myths, and I grew up with the notion that Hephaistos was perhaps not strictly historical—neither a deified man nor even a devil. But, putting the best face on it, I ask who gave the god the idea of the shield, or the pattern of it?

There is another question of a similar kind, which haunts me. If we are not quite clear whether the Catalogue of the Ships was in the original *Iliad,* at all events a great many Greek heroes from overseas were gathered for the leaguer of Troy, and they did not come alone. Who built their ships? I forget exactly how many ships the Catalogue tells us there were, and the precise figure does not matter. Thucydides says it was twelve hundred.[2] It was a large army in the story, and the ships were small in early times; so there must in any case have been a great many of them.

[1] A course of four lectures delivered, on the Sharp Foundation of the Rice Institute, in the Physics Amphitheatre, September 29, 30, and October 1, and 2, 1925, by T. R. Glover, Fellow and Classical Lecturer, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Public Orator in the University.

[2] Thucydides, i, 10.

No hint has reached us that listeners to the great epic raised questions about those ships; they seem to have taken them for granted. They themselves must have been, in the phrase of Thucydides, "making considerable use of the sea," [1] and would perhaps have accepted the historian's reflection that "if Agamemnon had not had something of a fleet, he could not, as he lived on the mainland, have been lord of any islands except those on the coast, and these would not have been *many*." [2]

I ask myself what lies behind these references to a great and complex work of art, and to a great fleet, or at least the ready allusion to ships in great numbers. When we read *The Faerie Queene* we move from palace to palace of more than Elizabethan splendour. We realize that in the poem we have a reflection of the interests of the time and of its arts; William the Conqueror and his barons, and the Wars of the Roses are far away; and castles have given place to palaces. Even if the palaces, like that of Acrasia in the Second Book which Sir Guyon destroyed, like Castle Joyeous and the House of Busirane in the Third Book, belong chiefly to the enemy, the poet is interested in them as he is in gardens. Every description, however idealized, or however directly inspired by Tasso or Ariosto, speaks of Elizabethan England and its tastes and arts. It is the same in the Nibelungenlied; the poet can always find it in his heart to pause for a little to describe clothes or armour. As a French critic once pointed out, it is in vain to wish to be an anachronism; one is immutably fixed in one's own generation. Round about Homer were people who used the sea so freely that, if twelve hundred ships were an exaggeration or an interpolation, it was not at all ridiculous, it

[1] Thucydides, i, 3.
[2] Thucydides, i, 9.

was quite conceivable. And further, they were so familiar with the artistic treatment of metal, that if, in the smithy of Hephaistos, the poet gave rein to his imagination, the wonderful shield did not seem out of the way; it was better than any they had seen—wonderfully more elaborate, if you like, but still possible. So we are in a society where craftsmen and shipwrights are taken for granted. The works of their hands may or may not attract attention; the ships do not, and the shields only when they are more than usually fine.

The poet and the people for whom he wrote, or sang, or recited, whichever be the more historical word—can we relate them more closely, or be clearer about them? Archaeology has done a good deal to illuminate the matter and to perplex us. We know now that Mycene was once rich in gold, and that art flourished there amazingly; and, even if we are told to beware of identifying the Mycenaean people and their civilization and their date with Homer's, we know definitely that at least behind Homer lay wonders that make the detail, if not the fabric, of his story credible to us. He was not spinning dreams; behind everything he mentions lies something real, something at least with which his first hearers could connect it. "I have suspicion", wrote Pindar, "that the fame of Odysseus is become greater than aught he suffered, and all because of sweet-voiced Homer; for over his lies and wingèd craft something of majesty abideth, and the excellence of his skill persuadeth us to his fables unawares." Yes! as the English satirist had it—

> Many an honest Indian ass
> Goes for an unicorn.

Let us remember that—asses and India, "mighty monoceroses with immeasured tails", norwhals and their horns—

there is something behind the traveller's tale, if it is only St. Brendan; and if we have to go as far as Corrievrechan (as we have been lately told) for Scylla and Charybdis, Homer was not "pinnacled dim in the vast inane", but lived in a real world. If his wingèd craft cast a light of imagination over real things and led men into fables unawares, the things were real,—real as the men who listened and enjoyed. Even Sindbad the sailor voyaged to real lands, if on the way he ran into marvels.

The real world of Homer, then, in which he lived and moved, suffered and was happy like the real poet he was—what of it?

At one time it was conjectured that Homer worked upon the foundation of ballads, and by and by dogma grew up around ballads at large, and it was required of us to believe in their communal origin. Matthew Arnold repudiated the suggestion of the balladist and his lowly invention, his tags and his halting rhythm and rhyme. Since then the ballad has been rescued from its putative parents in the cottage, as the epic of Wallace has been from Blind Harry, and all has been claimed for genius doing its proper work. One Homer carries far more assent to-day than fifty years ago, even if we do not all go so far as Mr. T. W. Allen[1] in localizing him in Chios and restoring him to his family, who were little credit to him. "Did you ever meet a stupider breed than the rhapsodes?" says Antisthenes to Niceratus [2] and the young man, though he always listens to them, says he has not. No, we will not tie Homer down to the Homeridae or to Chios either, but we will neglect the asseverations of the learned of much later ages, and try on the evidence

[1] *Homer, Origins and Transmission.*
[2] Xenophon, *Symp.* iii, 5, 6.

of Homer himself to identify the age and the sphere in which he was at home.

It is emphasized nowadays that Homer's poems had not, as they stand, a popular origin.[1] If it is urged that the lowly love to talk of kings, it is also true that their kings are very like themselves, and Homer's princes are not peasants with labels tied to them like Bottom's wall and lion. The grossness of peasant life, which survives in the Scottish and English ballads, the essential coarseness of feeling and lowliness of outlook, are wanting in the *Iliad;* you have only to think of Achilles beside some of the kings of the ballads. The art of Homer, even his vehicle, the hexameter verse, cries aloud of a long and ascending artistic development; and perhaps even the length of his poems tends to class him with his own Demodocus who sang to princes and did not tune his harp to please a peasant's ear. Compare him with Hesiod who knew the Homeric poems but prefers to give useful counsel for the life of the lowly. Homer then sang for kings and of kings; it was poetry for men of the highest culture of their day, for men who could put its value on it as Alcinous and Odysseus could on the singing of Demodocus. The lay of Demodocus, moreover, suggests an attitude to the gods which is not quite that of the cottage. It is further pointed out that "the absence of striking anachronisms decidedly favours the view that the period involved in the development of Homeric poetry was not long". The poet can give the names of his heroes' grandfathers and of their sons; the genealogies are short. Men are degenerating—οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσι—no doubt; they always do, so that we need not abruptly talk of tall, Northern stock being lost by crossing with short Mediterranean people, though doubtless this also befell.

[1] See H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, pp. 228 ff.

Professor Chadwick, in his interesting study of the Heroic Age, goes further and finds common traits between hero epics and ages of North and South.[1] Neither Northward nor Southward, he holds, is the heroic epic a native outgrowth from an ancient and high civilization; in both regions it comes when a half-civilized people is dominant and in possession, but is reacted upon by the civilization of those whose lands it holds. You find in both the weakening of the ties of kindred, while the bond of allegiance gains strength; irresponsible or nearly irresponsible kings rule on the strength of prestige in war in princedoms without national basis, but yet related to one another. Old tribal and chthonic cults yield place to universal and anthropomorphic gods. The clan is there, but while the duty of vengeance is recognized, it is not clear to what degrees of kin it extends.[2] There is more of the clan in Athens, historical Athens, as laws about estates and heiresses show and the difficulties of Cleisthenes prove. The marriage system is not very clear in Homer; the wife may remain with her own people or she may leave them and go with her husband; the same word seems to serve for the bride-price paid by the husband and for the gifts made by her parents to the bride.[3] Social usages are changing, and it is noted that the nobles have followed the king to the town.[4]

The king we call him; but, *basileus* as he is, he is much more like a mediaeval baron. The name is given freely, but it is not used of the gods, and *anax* has a wider significance. It is not clear how the king comes to be king, or at least how his ancestor did; the gods, of course, and Zeus had something to do with it. They give the king *themistes*

[1] *The Heroic Age*, pp. 442 ff.
[2] *The Heroic Age*, pp. 359-365.
[3] *The Heroic Age*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] W. R. Halliday, *Growth of City State*, p. 391.

—those decisions in cases of dispute which make custom or follow it—and the kings, the justicers, dispense and maintain the *themistes* of Zeus, sceptre in hand; and even so Achilles defies Agamemnon, the *anax* of men, for he, too, is a king, or a baron. Thucydides tells us that "aforetime there were hereditary kingships based on fixed privileges" (ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς γέρασι)[1], and Aristotle that in the heroic ages monarchy was exercised over voluntary subjects but limited to certain functions; the king was a general and a judge and had the control of religion.[2] That sounds very modern, but scholars to-day are impressed with the want of definition about the king's privileges. Sarpedon, speaking to Glaucus, is as explicit as most of them—

"Glaucus, why have we particular honour, of seat, and mess of flesh, and brimming cup, in Lycia, and all men look upon us as gods? And why do we hold great demesnes along the banks of Xanthus, goodly to look upon with planted trees and fields of wheat? Now must we stand among the foremost Lycians and face consuming war, that of the corsleted Lycians some may say: 'Our princes, that rule in Lycia, sit not inglorious, when they eat of the fat sheep and drink the choice delicious wine; nay, might and manliness are with them, for they fight among the foremost Lycians.' Friend of my soul, were it that we two, once escaped from this war, should live forever, ageless and deathless, I would not fight myself amid the foremost, nor would I send thee into the battle that gives glory to men; but, for fates of death stand over us, ten thousand of them, that mortal man may not escape nor avoid, let us go forward, whether we shall give glory to some other man, or another yield it to us." [3]

[1] Thucydides, i, 13.
[2] *Politics*, iii, 14, 14.
[3] *Iliad*, xii, 310-328.

There is the Homeric prince at his princeliest—a man of wealth and privilege, with a clear open eye for life and death, and a sense of responsibility; he is not his own, and life and death are for him what they are for others; glory is to be won, self-respect to be kept, and his people are to be remembered. For round about the king is a council; *Agamemnon has one, and Alcinous, and Zeus himself in* heaven; though neither on earth nor in heaven is it quite clear who will be summoned to the council, nor what are the powers of those summoned.[1] That they come and sit, that they listen and perhaps speak, is something. It points to the future, and even in Homer *καί ποτέ τις εἰπῇσι* suggests a motive: "Men will say." Hector tells Andromache: "All this I remember; but I have shame before the Trojan men and the long-robed Trojan women, and I may not avoid the battle like a coward".[2] He says it again to himself in the agony at the end, and "Polydamas will be the first to upbraid me . . . and one, a worse man than I, shall say 'Hector hath trusted in his might and undone the people' ".[3]

Criticism of the prince, to his face and behind his back—in the Council and perhaps in an assembly in the agora—that is mere human life, but it points all one way. The old French monarchy was "despotism tempered by epigrams". Polydamas, warrior and "blameless" as he was, excelled in speech,[4] and if Hector "will ever reprehend him in the assembly, good though his words be",[5] though they are friends,[6] still Hector is sensitive to what he says. No one ever included sensitiveness in a written constitution,

[1] T. D. Seymour, *Life in the Homeric Age*, pp. 97, 98.
[2] *Iliad*, vi, 441.
[3] *Iliad*, xxii, 99-107.
[4] *Iliad*, xviii, 252.
[5] *Iliad*, xii, 211.
[6] *Iliad*, xviii, 251.

but even kings cannot escape it. *Aidos,* we are told, is deeply written in the nature of the Homeric hero,[1] he feels it for the Trojan women, for those who cannot help themselves; it checks him, it forbids cowardice, falsity, cruelty; and sensitiveness is part of it.

Meanwhile sometimes the assembly meets—not necessarily often. Telemachus summons it in Ithaca, and the hero Aigyptios (whose name may be noted in passing) rises to speak with some surprise: " Hearken now, men of Ithaca, to what I say. Never once has our assembly been held, no single session, since royal Odysseus went away in hollow ships. Who is it calls us now so strangely?" [2] There is some freedom of discussion, as Polydamas implies, as Diomedes shows,[3] and Antinous in Ithaca [4] and others of the suitor faction. The assembly meets, and discusses; there is criticism, even abuse; then they break up. How far anybody is expected to be bound by what is said, how far there are any real decisions at all, how far the king may go with a veto, cannot at this date be definitely pronounced; perhaps it could not then. Reconciliations were made in assembly, oaths made and gifts of atonement exchanged.[5] There, too, is the famous trial scene, which I may quote in full, though comment might be long.

"And he"—it is the Shield of Achilles, and he is Hephaistos—"made therein two cities of speaking men. In one were marriages" which do not concern us at this point. "And the people were gathered in the market-place: and there was a strife; two men strove about the price of a slain man: the one spake to the people and contended that

[1] G. Murray, *Rise of the Greek Epic,* Ch. III, pp. 80-88.
[2] *Odyssey,* ii, 25-28.
[3] *Iliad,* ix, 32.
[4] *Odyssey,* ii, 85 ff.
[5] *Iliad,* xix, 171-183.

he had paid"—so Purves translates it, but Andrew Lang is perhaps nearer early usage, thus—"the one claiming to make full atonement, expounding to the people, but the other denied him and would take nought; and both were fain to receive arbitrament at the hand of a daysman. And the folk were cheering both, as they took part on either side. And heralds kept order among the folk, while the elders on polished stones were sitting in the sacred circle and holding in their hands staves from the loud-voiced heralds. Then before the people they rose up and gave judgment each in turn. And in the midst lay two talents of gold, to be given to him who should plead among them most righteously." [1]

We need not at this point pause to decide whether the question be as to the actual payment of an agreed blood-price or the refusal to receive any blood-price at all. Here is controversy, almost litigation; and it is in the agora, among the people; and there we shall find it again.

But we are still a very long way from Democracy, as the conduct of Odysseus in the Greek Assembly outside Troy sufficiently proves. "Whatever man of the people he saw and found him shouting, him he drove with his sceptre and chode him with loud words: 'Good sir, sit still and hearken to the words of others that are thy betters; but thou art no warrior, nay! a weakling, never reckoned whether in battle or in council. In no wise can we Achaians all be kings here. A multitude of masters is no good thing; let there be one master, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counselling Kronos hath granted it." [2]

Homer goes further. He draws us the first picture of

[1] *Iliad,* xviii, 497-588.
[2] *Iliad,* ii, 198-205.

the democratic man. Thersites is "bandy-legged and lame of one foot, and his two shoulders rounded, arched down upon his chest; and over them his head was warped, and a scanty stubble sprouted upon it"; and he shouted. We have his speech, full of abuse of the great; Agamemnon has his tent or hut full of bronze, of women and of spoils, and now he wants gold as well—the ransom of other men's captives "whom I perchance or some other Achaian has led captive" —or a young girl might be more to his mind; better far for the Greeks to go home to Greece and leave Agamemnon to fight his own battles and win his own prizes; and Achilles is little better—he pretends anger, but he is a slacker. Odysseus dealt with him as he deserved; he will have no raving like this, from the basest of men, shrill orator though he is, and if Thersites tries it again he will strip him naked and beat him out of the assembly; and, by way of earnest, he gives him a blow with his golden sceptre and fetches out a bloody weal, the length of his vulgar back. Thersites sat down and wept, and warriors laughed.

So the episode of Thersites ends for the time; but we know it did not end, and never has ended; and we may use it as evidence for two material points at least. First, then, Homer was appealing to an audience of princes, for whom the personal appearance of Thersites was ludicrous, and who would heartily enjoy seeing him silenced with a blow. Second, and more important for our inquiry, the democratic man has appeared. If Thersites had not literally the build of the Greek artisan, if he was not really as ugly as a democrat, or as ill-tongued, we can see the future in him.

O villain, O shameless of heart,
  O bawler and brawler self-seeking,
The land, the Assembly, the tolls
  Are all with thine impudence reeking,

And the Courts and the actions at law;
They are full unto loathing and hate!
Thou stirrest the mud to its depths
Perturbing the whole of the State.[1]

Yes, Cleon had come already, but too soon. They beat him and silence him, and the land enjoys great quietness for the time being. And yet—

We began with the Shield of Achilles and we have come round to it again and the man who made it or made its model. He was a craftsman, and the great chiefs, kings or barons, enjoyed his art. Read once more the wonderful series of pictures wrought into that shield, and think how the supreme artist, the poet Homer, halted the action of his poem to tell of the shield. Let Lessing tell us, as is true, that we watch its making and are busy and in action, we are not mere spectators with Aeneas and Venus studying a museum-piece, history book in hand. That is very well, but still the story of Troy, the wars of Hector and Achilles —all is halted for two hundred lines, for a work of art.[2] Elsewhere we have the staining of ivory [3] and embroidery or woven figures.[4] If the woman of Maeonia or Caria, who stains the ivory to be a treasure piece which many a warrior would have for his chariot, is a slave, Homer does not say so; nor does he allude, we may note, to the elephant being, like the lion, a native of Greece or of the Troad, so that by and by we may have to ask about the supply of ivory and its sources. Elsewhere we have a woman definitely working for wages, even if it is Helen herself who weaves a great web and figures in it many conflicts of Trojans and Achaians. It is other arts that are most commonly

[1] Aristophanes, *Knights,* 303 f. (Rogers).
[2] See Andrew Lang, *Homer and His Age,* p. 106, for the contrast of Quintus of Smyrna, who has no naif delight in such descriptions.
[3] *Iliad,* iv, 141.
[4] *Iliad,* iii, 125.

allowed to Helen; but the passage reminds us to look for more things to be done within the home than are done there now or have been for centuries.

Odysseus, as a famous passage recalls,[1] was the craftsman who made his own bed. Probably the rest of the domestic furniture was made at home. King Priam's son, Lycaon, was captured by Achilles one night in his father's orchard while he was cutting with a bronze knife young shoots of a wild fig tree to be hand-rails of a chariot.[2] This at least suggests that the chariot was to be built in the palace yard; and before we leave it, we may recall a sentence of Hesiod[3] —"a waggon hath a hundred pieces (of wood)", so that the young prince must have been a skilled workman or had skilled men by him. There is, in another passage, a chariot builder at work with gleaming iron.[4] The miller and baker no one would expect to find in Priam's city or Agamemnon's; their work was still done by the women of the house. Indeed, diet generally will only bring us again to the household; it was limited in variety, though, as the story of the Suitors also suggests, not in quantity. Bread and the flesh of the swine seem the chief staples, and Menelaus did not like the fish to which he and his men were reduced on the island off Egypt.[5] It is true that his grave housekeeper laid food of many kinds before Telemachus, and the carver gave the guests plates of flesh of all sorts, and Menelaus set before them with his own hands fat slices of a chine of beef.[6] But it is still the product of the home farm, not bought of a butcher. The goose is there, for Penelope

[1] *Odyssey*, xxiii, 189 ff.
[2] *Iliad*, xxi, 37.
[3] *Works and Days*, 456.
[4] *Iliad*, iv, 485.
[5] *Odyssey*, iv, 368.
[6] *Odyssey*, iv, 55-66. It may be remembered from the diary of Mr. Pepys that Charles II ate meat with his fingers and got his dress dirty.

keeps twenty,[1] but the domestic fowl is omitted, and no one eats eggs. The clothes, too, are home-made; woman and goddess both spin and ply the loom. Perhaps women were more useful in that age.

Some trades there were outside the family, one gathers. There is the fair palace of Paris "that himself had builded with them that were most excellent carpenters then in deep-soiled Troy-land; these made him his chamber and hall and courtyard hard by to Priam and Hector in the upper city".[2] A simile, used to illustrate the deftness with which Hephaistos made youth and maiden to dance on the Shield of Achilles, describes the potter, when, "sitting by the wheel that fitteth between his hands, he maketh trial of it whether it run".[3] The smith, still as ever in Greece the copper-smith (*chalceus*), hammers out the fair round shield of bronze stitched within with many bulls' hides, and rivets of gold all round the circle,[4] though we are told that the huge shield of Ajax, seven ply of bulls' hide, overlaid with bronze, was made by "Tychios, far best of hide-cutters, that had his home in Hyle".[5] At Pylos comes the smith (*chalceus* again) "with his smith's tools in hand, his implements of art, anvil and hammer and the shapely tongs, with which he works the gold", to put gold bands round the horns of a sacrificial heifer, "smoothing it till the goddess might be pleased to view the offering".[6] Iron tools are tempered in water,[7] and used as we saw by the chariot builder; so these tools described as *chalceïa* may be either specifically goldsmith's tools or tools more generally

[1] *Odyssey*, xix, 536.
[2] *Iliad*, vi, 314 ff.
[3] *Iliad*, xviii, 600.
[4] *Iliad*, xii, 295.
[5] *Iliad*, vii, 220.
[6] *Odyssey*, iii, 433.
[7] *Odyssey*, ix, 392.

described by an old name. Quite a number of tools are named, but there is no reference to the saw. But far earlier the saw was used on stone at Tiryns and Mycene, so we need draw no unhappy inference. Even Robinson Crusoe, if I remember, need not have trimmed his planks with an axe, if he had recalled that Defoe had previously given him a saw. A poet is not obliged to mention every trade in the directory nor every tool in the catalogue. Painters do not come into the story; but as ships are described as "black", "blue-prowed" and "red-cheeked," it is clear that the most dilatory of all trades was known, if prudently not admitted to the house.

There was some movement in certain professions as the swineherd Eumaeus tells Antinous: "Who ever goes and calls a stranger from abroad? Unless indeed the stranger is a master of some craft (*δημιοεργοί*, a term to notice), a prophet, healer of disease, or builder (*τέκτων*, the carpenter again), or else a wondrous bard who pleases by his song; for these are welcomed (*κλητοί*) by mankind the wide world over. A beggar who would ask, to be a torment to himself?" [1] To this let us add references to men in exile, fleeing blood-guilt, Theoclymenos the prophet, and the boy Patroclus, and our picture may be left, mere sketch as it is.

A world then of self-help, so far as many trades and industries are concerned—a world of almost self-sufficient households growing their own food and preparing it, and making their own commodities—but craftsmen who build chariots and ships and make shields and works of art; and Thersites critical of princes in general, as they are of one another in particular—the elements of the Greek world that we know are there; and we might pass on to it, but

[1] *Odyssey*, xvii, 382 ff.

one fruitful source of trouble to come calls for a moment's delay. That scholars are not clear about land tenure in these early times, may perhaps be right, and may reflect the times. Ridgeway finds no trace of the idea of private property in the *Iliad,* but allows that such adjectives as ἄκληρος and πολύκληρος (with no lot; with many lots) imply landed property held perpetually in severalty and its accumulation. Sale of land does not seem to be mentioned, but old Laertes acquired the farm to which he retired—κτεάτισσεν—which, says T. D. Seymour, "does not seem like a peculiarly royal act". Sarpedon and Glaucus, as we saw, had corn-land and fruit-land allotted to them in Lycia.[1] Odysseus had rights of pasture on the mainland somehow;[2] and his swine were kept on the hills, at some distance from his town, and his swineherd had a house out there, and drank wine, which again implies some considerable and settled culture of the grape, and probably vineyards with private owners or cultivators, if wine was to be so freely used that swineherds really had it. The vineyard involves some sort of enclosure; pasture does not; about cornfields we may hesitate with the contrasts before us of modern and mediaeval usage. The Shield of Achilles shows a rich thrice-ploughed cornfield on which many plowmen are driving their teams, with a cup of wine for each at the furrow's end; and furthermore the god set therein the demesne-land of a king where hinds were reaping with sharp sickles in their hands, and the sheaf-binders were busy with twisted bands of straw, and the king stood among them, silent, and happy in heart.[3] Boundaries in cornfields were marked by stones, in fruitlands by dykes, or walls, or hedges. A simile describes how two men contend about

[1] *Iliad,* xii, 314.
[2] *Odyssey,* iv, 635.
[3] *Iliad,* xviii, 541-557.

the marches of their land, with measuring rods in their hands, in a common field, when in narrow space they strive for equal shares [1]—ἐπιξύνῳ ἐν ἀρούρῃ may suggest mediaeval English methods but it might conceivably bear another meaning. So we have enclosed vineyards, lots assigned, a common field—perhaps on the strip system, perhaps alternately held, whatever virtue there be in *perhaps*—and open pasturage on the hillside.

The poet, once more, is a poet, with a story to tell: he is not an economic historian or a constitutional lawyer. The people to whom he sang knew all they cared to know of common fields, and of smiths with tools, and they disliked Thersites, and were glad to hear of his being put to shame. And then the story stops,—or perhaps the poet himself made the last scene of the *Odyssey*, where sad at heart the fathers of the slain suitors went trooping to the assembly, unsummoned this time by Telemachus or Odysseus, and Eupeithes (ominous name!) rose and denounced the king. Let us listen to him—"A monstrous deed hath this man wrought on the Achaians! For some he carried off in ships, and he lost the ships and the people too; and now he has come home and killed the very noblest men of Cephallenia. Up then! it will be shame for future times to know, if we take no revenge. Forth! ere they escape from us across the sea!" Others plead the sin of the suitors and the help of god given to Odysseus, but such counsel pleased them not; Eupeithes they approved and they straightway ran for their arms, and it comes to battle again. The gods have to intervene, "and for all coming time betwixt the two a peace was made by Pallas Athene, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, likened to Mentor in her form and voice". Homer, as we saw, knows not the grandsons of his heroes;

[1] *Iliad*, xii, 421.

"for all coming time" the peace was made; could we add, as Xenophon does to a similar scene in Athens, "and Demos abides by his oaths"?

So we pass from the Homeric age, uncertain as to its land-system or land-systems but aware of quarrels there—uncertain on the whole as to the rights of princes, but catching the unpleasant voices of Thersites and Eupeithes, and uneasy as to the quarrels of the nobles. And as I write the words, a workman outside my window clinks an iron tool, and I turn back to my first question, about smiths and ship-builders, the men one would fetch in from outside to the city. The dark ages of Greece begin, with Eupeithes fallen, the *Odyssey* closed, and still the smith busy with hammer and anvil, and the carpenter ready to replace the ships Odysseus lost, and on the land the plowmen go to and fro, forgetting for the moment who owns the land and on what tenure—there is a cup at the end of the furrow and a feast preparing, a great ox cooking under an oak.

How many centuries pass we do not know—and when the shadows break for a little we have a picture of a gloomy peasant farmer in an age of ships, and private property and lawsuits about inheritance—a man full of shrewd hints how to thrive, and a spirit that suggests he did not thrive—a picture of settled low *dis*content and conscious poverty. And still the smiths are busy. The earth is full of evils, and full of evils is the sea; and though you cross the sea to escape penury, it waits you on the further shore. Not one breed of strife is there on earth but twain; one makes war, and the other makes competition, the soul of business—"for when he that hath no business looketh on him that is rich, he hasteth to plow and to plant and to array his house; and neighbour vieth with neighbour hasting to be rich; good is this strife for men. Potter with potter is angry; the

worker in wood with the worker in wood, the poor envies the poor, and minstrel is jealous of minstrel." So Hesiod tells us in the opening of his *Works and Days* and reveals the continuity of the great trades—carpenter and potter and plowman; and again the smith clinks his tools. For in those days men went armed, Thucydides tells us;[1] they could do no other; when the mainland as well as the sea was full of pillage, when homes were unprotected and all intercourse dangerous, Hellenes had to go armed like barbarians—or like Aetolians and Acarnanians and such folk to-day. And if a man were too hard pressed, like the Greek poet of later days,[2] he dropped his shield on a bush and ran, and when he got home, he went to the smith and bought more weapons. So all was not lost; the smith flourished and laid money by or bought a bit of land. And if the ship foundered or was taken by pirates, the carpenter had more work. And men still ate bread, and wheat was wanted for that, and land to grow wheat. So if we know the names of no kings very certainly and can tell no great stories of the time, we know at least that three great trades went on; and that, whenever there was an interlude of peace and reason, the worker in wood and the worker in metal bettered themselves and improved at their work; and the farmer and his landlord and the hind meanwhile produced food somehow and began to think about land tenure and wages and prices.

Perhaps to this period belongs the tale of the Voyage for the Golden Fleece. True, the heroes were, some of them, fathers of the Homeric warriors—Peleus, Tydeus, Telamon and others; and everybody knew that Herakles belonged to a generation before Agamemnon. But Miss Bacon may

[1] Thucydides, i, 5.
[2] Archilochus fr 5 [51] Bergk.

be right in her interpretation of the saying of Charax that "the Argonauts sailed not with one ship but with a considerable fleet". In a sense, other than he intended, she says, his words sum up the truth; Argo was many ships. The archaeologists, she says, will let Argo sail at any time after 1600 B.C. Jason, sooner or later, came home four different ways—and long ways round some of them were, and ways associated in historic times with travel and trade.[1] Certainly in these dark ages, Greeks came to know the Black Sea well; for, as the darkness clears, they have just settled or are just about to settle all along its Western and Southern shores. Certainly, too, in these dark ages, they sailed other seas, for the breaking clouds reveal a world in which Greeks, though preferring the home farm, seem really more at home on the sea, and colonies are planting on the shores of Polyphemus, and Scylla is to have Greek neighbours. And it all means shipbuilders and their yards, and at the cost of a little anachronism let us try to see them at work in their yards

> —the city full
> Of paying wages, gilding Pallases,
> Of rations measured, roaring colonnades
> Of wineskins, oar-loops, bargaining for casks,
> Of nets of onions, olives, garlic-heads,
> Of chaplets, pilchards, flute girls and black eyes,
> Of oar-spars planed, pegs hammered, oar-loops fitted,
> Of boatswain's calls, and flutes, and trills, and whistles.[2]

It is not, indeed, thus that Pindar gets the Argo away; no hammer is heard; the heroes gather, led by "all-persuasive sweet desire for the ship Argo"; they sling the anchor over her prow and sail forth encouraged by lightning sent from Zeus. But imagine a ship-building Hesiod, and what

[1] J. R. Bacon, *The Voyage of the Argonauts,* especially pp. 121f., 142f., 167f.
[2] Aristophanes, *Acharnians,* 545 ff. with omissions (Rogers).

weary work the yards would show, growls about pay and weather and perils of the sea and the brutality of captains. And all the time there is development—new curves in the prows, new cuts for sails, and one shipwright is jealous of another as he grows rich on the strength of acute observation of men and timber and wave-lengths and so forth and builds ships that fetch the business to his yard. His name is not Thersites nor Eupeithes, but by and by he could talk with princes more effectively than they on the basis of achievement and wealth.

For in all our study of politics we have to remember economics, though we must not surrender to extravagant economists. Economic factors—yes! but men after all are engaged in life; "factors" play on them and men react, no doubt; but human nature is the main thing. We have kept looking again and again in this lecture in the direction of the smiths and the shipwrights. Now for another look. Industry, where a man works with his own hands and his own brain and handles sooner or later the whole of his product, develops him and individualizes him. He must think of his materials—how to adjust seven bull-hides to one another, and the compacted seven to the bronze or the bronze to them, and how best to fit in the gold studs; and in every material he uses Nature plays him some trick—tricks we associate for instance with heat and expansion, ductibility and so forth. Every material with its peculiarities, and all to be combined—one waggon and a hundred pieces to fit in—the man must get the habit of thinking; and when the sailor comes and explains the tricks of the sea, or the shipwright learns them for himself, he will think harder. This habit of thinking, once acquired, cannot be stopped till the body gives out, and a man's sons pick it up from him—"they come by it honest"—and challenge

him. Together they come to think of prices; why above all —put the building materials aside—should the prices of wheat and meat and oil vary so? And your craftsman turns economist at once, and hits a number of wrong reasons and by and by some right ones; and from the stalls of the market he brings his intelligence to bear on the sources of supply. Of course fish is dear after weeks of storm; anybody who builds and mends ships can understand that, but land and sea are not the same thing; you can see what is the matter with the sea—look at the boat! but what is the matter with the land, after so good a season? Oh! says the rustic at the stall, ask the noble Butades, or Bacchiad, or whoever is the head of the local noble family.

If a trade will set a man thinking about wheat and land and landlords, what will be the effect of an art upon his mind? Greek art was essentially alive, progressive, individual, open to ideas, instinct with criticism. When every craftsman had a bit of the artist in him, his reflections on markets and nobles and life and food and rights and wrongs will be not merely critical but constructive—reconstructive. Men hung about the smithy and talked and got new ideas.[1] Aristotle may say what he will about artisans in politics, and perhaps he is right about those of his day—a time when everything had been changed by slave-labour, large production, Mediterranean trade and imperialist ambitions. Let us get back to our own period—the age so dim to us, so perplexing to its own people, when craftsmen were artists with the independence of art surgent within them, critical and reconstructive; and better work than they had ever done before produces less return, and food costs more, and women have so many children (as they did) and

[1] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 493, πάρ δ'ἴθι χάλκειον θῶκον καὶ ἐπαλέα λεσχήν; the poet thinks it waste of time for his brother to loiter and chat.

the children eat so much (as they did); and the country people say it is the fault of the nobles that food is dear, and goods will not sell as they did overseas—though how the nobles are concerned there nobody can see, and everybody seems to be thinking of himself. Even the poets are not what they were. The rhapsodes are still reciting Homer—that is something to quicken life and thought, an education by the roadside, with which few that Boards of Education have ever contrived are even remotely comparable. But if you meet the living poets, they have nothing to say of Achilles, they are full of themselves and their loves and their hates, the cursed ills of ship, of flight and fight—more personal than honest Hesiod whom the country people quote.

So there we have the re-emerging world—a crowded world with no trace of race-suicide—a world of towns instead of tribes—real towns, not the villages our ancestors called towns knowing no better, but towns with walls and wharves, crowded streets and cramped quarters, and the land outside them in the hands of a few. The bays and headlands of Asia Minor have well-established Greek cities. Miletus in Homer was Carian, allied to Troy—"Nastes led the Carians, uncouth of speech, that possessed Miletus and the mount of Phthira of leafage numberless and the streams of Maeander and Mycale's steep head". If the Catalogue is a later addition to the *Iliad,* as people have said, then the Carians held Miletus later than we might have supposed. "Miletus", says Strabo, "was founded, or colonized, by Neleus by race from Pylos" with an alleged Messenian strain; and Herodotus tells us how Neleus, or whoever it may have been, had to fight the Carians for the place; and we have the best of evidence that the Carians put their minds on fighting and for centuries

were renowned at it. In the end Miletus remained partly Carian—through the captured wives according to what Herodotus heard, perhaps otherwise as well. Aristotle gives us noticeable hints as to the effect upon a constitution of a foreign element in the city; so here is another factor to reckon. The Greek world, re-emerging from the dark ages, is very modern—land questions, food questions, trade questions—the sea, the soil, and the foreigner—poets and travellers and traders and smiths and shipwrights rubbing shoulders in the market, and the prices up again on every stall. What can be done with a world that keeps changing? Can you stabilize life and society? or had you better change? and the crucial question is, change what? Sparta tried to stabilize herself, and her history suggests an antithesis to the Frenchman's aphorism—the more it is the same thing, the more it changes. Every generation saw Sparta more out of tune with the real world. Then, if it is to be adjustment, where will you begin? What will you change? What can you change? Thersites and Eupeithes have a good deal to say, and more people like to listen to them than Homer would have expected. But they are not constructive, they have no eye for sea and wind, for crop and season, nor for the birthrate. You cannot change these; but something must be done, and the question again is what?